

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Bureau of Radiological Health
Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0075

October, 1999

IDPH INFORMATION NOTICE: 99-X08: Request for information about possible radiation burns on patients undergoing procedures using fluoroscopy

ADDRESSEES: Dermatologists in Iowa

PURPOSE:

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is issuing this information notice to request assistance from Iowa dermatologists about possible radiation burns on patients undergoing fluoroscopic procedures. We ask that you review this notice and report any possible cases to the IDPH.

DISCUSSION:

During a 1999 inspection of an Iowa hospital, it was discovered that in 1995 and 1996, three patients who underwent heart catheterization fluoroscopy experienced a burn area on their backs. One patient had a total fluoro exposure time in excess of 60 minutes.

Though the Iowa Radiation Machines and Radioactive Material Rules requires reporting of an event that may have caused an individual to receive a shallow dose equivalent to the skin of 250 rad or more, the above burns had not been reported. We understand that in many cases, the hospital is not informed about possible burns because the patient is seen by a dermatologist. Therefore, we are asking your assistance in reporting any possible burns to us so that we can work with the hospitals to reduce the radiation exposure to these patients.

We ask that you report any skin disorders on patients that were exposed to fluoro during procedures such as heart catheterization. The burns usually appear in square (4 to 6 inch) area on the patient's back.

The patient's name is kept confidential by Iowa Administrative Code. Information requested:

Patient's name

Gender of the patient

Age of the patient

Description of the skin disorder (size, degree of redness, shape)

Type of procedure using fluoro

Approximate date of the procedure

Date the patient reported the skin disorder to you

We understand doctors' reluctance to report this type of information. Our goal is to reduce patient exposure voluntarily by monitoring possible radiation burns. We appreciate your cooperation in providing the above information and in helping us to reduce exposure to As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA).

If you have any questions about this information notice, please contact Paul Koehn, 515/281-3806, or me.

Donald A. Flater, Chief
Bureau of Radiological Health
515/281-3478